

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 16-18 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 1-8, 11-15, and 19 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of generating a ~~variable data file~~ to be used to generate custom printed articles article print file, the method comprising the steps of:

generating a master file that includes all non variable content of the custom printed article and place markers that indicate positions at which document specific content is to be inserted, the master file being in a page description language;

generating a data definition file that specifies format of the document specific content that is to be inserted at the positions indicated by the place markers in the master file;

reading a template including a plurality of tokens, at least one of the tokens indicating a field in a database;

generating a data structure including a plurality of printed article ID's;

identifying a record in a the database using a first printed article ID; and;

extracting data from a the field of the record which is specified by a first the one token in the plurality of tokens; and

outputting the data to the a variable data file;

using the data definition file in converting the variable data file to a PDL variable file, the PDL variable file being in the page description language;

processing the master file so as to generate the non variable content in rasterized form;

processing the PDL variable file so as to generate the document specific content in rasterized form; and

merging the document specific content in rasterized form with the non variable content in rasterized form so as to produce the custom printed article print file.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 further comprising the ~~steps~~ step of:

incrementing an index to point to a second printed article ID ~~in the data structure~~ in response to reading a second token in the template.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of: outputting plain text included in a third token read from the template to the variable data file.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of identifying a record in a database comprises the step of:

using ~~the~~ an order ID and the printed article ID to identify a the record in a the database.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 ~~wherein further comprising~~ the step of ~~generating a data structure comprises the sub-step of:~~

producing an array of printed article IDs, in which the printed article IDs are arranged in order corresponding to the layout of corresponding printed articles on a printing medium.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~1~~ 5 further comprising the ~~steps~~ step of:

incrementing an index to point to a second printed article ID in the array in response to reading a second token in the template.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein further comprising~~ the step of ~~generating a data structure comprises the sub-step of:~~

generating a data structure comprising a plurality of entries, each of which includes a printed article ID.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:
calling a function specified by a function named in the first one token to process the data
that was extracted from the field of the record specified by the one token before outputting the
data to the variable data file.
9. (Original) The method according to claim 8 wherein processing performed by the
function comprises a sub-step of:
validating the data.
10. (Original) The method according to claim 8 wherein processing performed by the
function comprises a sub-step of:
formatting the data.
11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein~~ further comprising the step of
~~generating a data structure comprises the sub step of:~~
generating an array having a number of columns equal to a number of columns in which
printed articles are printed on a web, and a number of rows equal to a number of rows of printed
articles to be printed on the web, in which each array entry includes a order ID and a printed
article ID.
12. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11 wherein the step of generating a
~~data structure~~ the array comprises the sub-steps of:
for each column in which articles are to be printed on a web:
reading a first data structure which indicates a layout of groups of printed articles
on the web to identify a group of printed articles at a group position on the web;
reading a second data structure which indicates an arrangement of printed articles
within the group of printed articles to identify a printed article at a printed article position within
the group;

writing a printed article ID to an array which corresponds to the layout of printed articles on the web based on information read from the first and second data structures.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium containing programming instructions for generating a ~~variable data file to be used to generate custom printed articles~~ article print file, the computer readable medium including programming instructions for performing the steps of:

generating a master file that includes all non variable content of the custom printed article and place markers that indicate positions at which document specific content is to be inserted, the master file being in a page description language;

generating a data definition file that specifies format of the document specific content that is to be inserted at the positions indicated by the place markers in the master file;

reading a template including a plurality of tokens, at least one of the tokens indicating a field in a database;

~~reading a data structure including a plurality of printed article ID's;~~

identifying a record in a the database using a first printed article ID;

extracting data from a the field of the record which is specified by a ~~first~~ the one token;

and

outputting the data to a variable data file;

using the data definition file in converting the variable data file to a PDL variable file, the PDL variable file being in the page description language;

processing the master file so as to generate the non variable content in rasterized form;

processing the PDL variable file so as to generate the document specific content in rasterized form; and

merging the document specific content in rasterized form with the non variable content in rasterized form so as to produce the custom printed article print file.

14. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium according to claim 13 wherein the programming instructions ~~for generating a data structure~~ further include programming instructions for performing the step of:

generating a array having a number of columns equal to a number of columns in which printed articles are printed on a web, and a number of rows equal to a number of rows of printed articles to be printed on the web, in which each array entry includes a order ID and a printed article ID.

15. (Currently Amended) A system for producing custom printed articles comprising:
a high speed printer;

a computer electrically coupled to the high speed printer, the computer supplying a custom printed article print file to the high speed printer, the ~~server~~ computer including:

a means for generating a master file that includes all non variable content of the custom printed article and place markers that indicate positions at which document specific content is to be inserted, the master file being in a page description language;

a means for generating a data definition file that specifies format of the document specific content that is to be inserted at the positions indicated by the place markers in the master file;

a means for reading a template including a plurality of tokens, at least one of the tokens indicating a field in a database;

~~a means for reading a data structure including a plurality of printed article ID's;~~

a means for identifying a record in a the database using a ~~first~~ printed article ID;

a means for extracting data from a the field of the record which is specified by a ~~first the one~~ token ~~included in the plurality of tokens;~~ and

a means for outputting the data to a variable data file;

a means for using the data definition file in converting the variable data file to a PDL variable file, the PDL variable file being in the page description language;

a means for processing the master file so as to generate the non variable content in rasterized form;

a means for processing the PDL variable file so as to generate the document specific content in rasterized form; and

a means for merging the document specific content in rasterized form with the non variable content in rasterized form so as to produce the custom printed article print file.

16-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A system for producing custom printed articles comprising:

a high speed printer;

a computer electrically coupled to the high speed printer, the computer supplying a custom printed article print file to the high speed printer, the server computer including:

a processor programmed to:

generate a master file that includes all non variable content of the custom printed article and place markers that indicate positions at which document specific content is to be inserted, the master file being in a page description language;

generate a data definition file that specifies format of the document specific content that is to be inserted at the positions indicated by the place markers in the master file;

read a template including a plurality of tokens, at least one of the tokens indicating a field in a database;

~~read a data structure including a plurality of printed article ID's;~~

identify a record in a the database using a ~~first~~ printed article ID;

extract data from a the field of the record which is specified by ~~a first the one~~ token ~~included in the plurality of tokens;~~ and

output the data to a variable data file;

use the data definition file in converting the variable data file to a PDL variable file, the PDL variable file being in the page description language;

process the master file so as to generate the non variable content in rasterized form;

process the PDL variable file so as to generate the document specific content in rasterized form; and

merge the document specific content in rasterized form with the non variable content in rasterized form so as to produce the custom printed article print file.